



Editors' introduction

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As we write this editorial on 7 November 2020, according to the WHO, 1,234,839 people are known to have died worldwide from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Netherlands, where Maurits is employed, has lost 7759 people. The United States, where Ellen is based, has had three straight days of record COVID-19 cases, and is 4 days into the lack of clarity about the Presidential election. According to the CDC, over the course of the pandemic the US alone has had over 234,000 deaths due to the virus. This is a global pandemic of truly astounding proportions, whose effects we will all be feeling for years to come.

One of the effects of this pandemic has been the decision on the parts of many universities and scholarly organizations to cancel academic conferences and seminars. Though minor in the large scale of the impacts of this pandemic, this was a very real loss to our profession. Conferences are the lifeblood of many researchers, teachers, and graduate students. They provide opportunities for communication and outreach and allow our scattered academic communities to gather. They are also places where early career scholars make the connections needed to navigate their careers and expand their research circles. Scholars use conferences to test out new projects, to share initial results, and to invite comments and constructive critique to help propel projects forward.

Recognizing that although some conferences have now adjusted their future meetings to an online format, people who had passed the scientific committees and been accepted to present their research in 2020 likely faced no new opportunities to share that work, we decided to produce a modified issue of our journal, aimed at providing a forum for these in-progress works. We solicited scholars accepted to many conferences who had planned on presenting water history related works, with the understanding that since these projects were both in progress and already partially vetted, they would undergo minimal and/or altered journal review processes.

We invite our readers to engage the following pieces (capped at ca. 1000 and ca. 5000 words) in the spirit of professional collegiality and support that they would have been met with in meetings. These essays represent early stages of projects, and we encourage you, if the pieces catch your attention and interest, to reach out to the authors. We thank our colleagues for their patience with and participation in this process, and are excited that this issue may start a discussion about the changing roles of academic journals in the post-COVID academic landscape.

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Thank you so much, and we hope that you are all safe and well, and continue to find ways to incorporate the study of and care for water in your lives.

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